Association of Transportation Safety Information Professionals

(3)

2002 Traffic Records Best Practice
Application Form

Part 1 - Project Summary

PROJECT TITLE:_Collision Rankings and the Aggregation of Performance Measures for Grantees

APPLICATION ORGANIZATION:

Lead Agency: California Office of Traffic Safety
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Identify to which national agenda goal(s) this applies:

Goal # 3 To integrate the planning of highway safety programs and highway safety information systems.

Was this item to be addressed according to your traffic records committee's strategic plan? If yes, which item.

Yes! California's updated (1998) Traffic Records Assessment, which serves as California's Traffic Records Committee's strategic plan, includes the following goals: 1) OTS should establish a process for using highway safety data to develop, manage, and evaluate their highway safety program; and 2) OTS should develop an information system for their use that is flexible, accessible, and will allow retrieval of data to meet objectives established as part of the highway safety management plan.

PROJECT COST:

Planned: $ Actual: $
The cost of both projects was absorbed with existing resources within the office.
The estimated staff hours for two components of this project are as follows:

Collision Rankings – development -1800 hours
annual maintenance - 40 hours
Enhanced Evaluation- development – 200 hours
annual maintenance - 40 hours

Project benefits: (Both Tangible And Intangible)

Collision Rankings

The automated collision rankings provide cities and counties an indication of traffic safety problems within a specific collision type (e.g., speed related, alcohol involved, hit and run). City and county staff can utilize this information to determine what type of action needs to be taken to improve traffic safety within their communities. The rankings also allow cities to see how their city ranks with similar sized cities. OTS utilizes the rankings to facilitate funding decisions and identify emerging traffic safety problem areas. In addition, the collision rankings can be accessed through the OTS web page (www.ots.ca.gov).

Enhanced Evaluation - Aggregation of Performance-Based Measurements of Grant Projects to Improve Evaluation

The aggregation of performance-based measurements allows OTS to showcase the impact of OTS funded grants on national priority program areas. Historically, states have only viewed their traffic safety impact on the movement of statewide numbers; when in reality a more accurate performance measurement may be the aggregation of performance measures from funded cities with similar grant performance measures. Our experience has shown that OTS funded cities show greater traffic safety impact than statewide numbers. To our knowledge, no other state is aggregating performance measures at the grantee level. This process greatly enhances problem identification and the evaluation of OTS traffic safety programs and funded projects.

PART 2 - PROJECT DETAIL

NARRATIVE

Please describe the scope of the project and how it relates to the 6 Goals of the 'National Agenda for the improvement of highway safety information systems'.

Collision Rankings

This project was designed to provide the OTS with a means of identifying possible traffic safety problem areas throughout the state, enhance problem identification, and to assist in the evaluation of funded projects. At the same time, the local jurisdictions could utilize this information to help them in their efforts to increase traffic safety in their communities. The rankings, provided by OTS, allow each jurisdiction to assess their problem areas in relation to other jurisdictions of like size as well as on a statewide basis. Utilizing the various data sources, OTS has developed a system that is used to develop policies and programs to maintain and increase the safety of California's roadways. The collision rankings information is integrated into the planning and implementation of highway safety programs funded by OTS.

Enhanced Evaluation - Aggregation of Performance-Based Measurements for Grantees

This process allows OTS to gather and evaluate collision information to contrast grantee goal attainment with statewide goal attainment. Cities with the greatest goal attainment (e.g., reduction in alcohol involved crashes) are classified as noteworthy applicants in future funding requests. In addition, these programs are looked at closely for "best practices". The best practices are in turn integrated into OTS-developed program area "Blueprints", or best practices strategies to assist grantee development of proposals and project agreements, and shared with current and potential grantees via meetings and the OTS website.

Describe the major process steps that you went through to do this project:

Collision Rankings

OTS identified seven major collision and five victim categories to use in ranking each jurisdiction. A procedure was established with the California Highway Patrol, the statewide crash data (SWITRS) management agency, to download the desired data from their statewide crash database into Microsoft Access database tables. This data is combined with population data from the State Department of Finance, non-CHP DUI arrest data from the State Department of Justice, and estimated Daily Vehicle Miles of Travel from the State Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Separate collision and victim rates are established for each jurisdiction based on per 1,000 vehicle miles traveled, and per 1,000 population. Based on these rates, city rankings are established for each jurisdiction within a population group. A computer form was designed to display the rankings for each jurisdiction. Various reports are available reflecting the rankings of cities and counties. The data has been made available on the OTS Web site utilizing the form noted above.

Enhanced Evaluation - Aggregation of Performance-Based Measurements for Grantees

The first step in this process was the design of Excel spreadsheets to automatically capture base year and funded project collision data. This information is updated quarterly and is submitted with Quarterly Performance Reports. Numbers from the year-end Quarterly Performance Review report are grouped with other grantees with the same goal (e.g., alcohol involved crashes) to determine the impact of funded grants on a particular goal. These numbers are then presented in the OTS Annual Progress Report that is submitted to NHTSA, FHWA and the State Legislature.

Did the project successfully achieve the benefits identified earlier?

Yes _XX_____
No _____

Describe how the project actually met or did not meet the benefits:

Collision Rankings

The collision rankings continue to exceed expected benefits. The collision rankings facilitate funding decisions, enhance problem identification, and assist in the planning of highway safety programs. The the value of placement of the rankings on the California website was underestimated. The media and traffic safety professionals continue to regularly access the rankings through this website.

Enhanced Evaluation - Aggregation of Performance-Based Measurements for Grantees

This project also exceeded our expected benefits. We have been able to report a greater traffic safety impact in cities where we fund grants than the impact on statewide numbers. For example, in 2001 funded projects reported that alcohol-involved fatal and injury collisions decreased 16 percent (408) from reported base year data of 2,554 to 2,146. Statewide numbers reflected alcohol-involved fatal and injury collisions increased 4 percent (816) from 20,202 to 21,018.

Submit via mail to:
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